

ALASKA CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

WE CAN HELP!

*Raising a child is a big responsibility.
Children require lots of love, care and attention.*

*Every child has the legal right to receive financial support
from both parents, regardless if the parents are separated, divorced
or were never married.*

THERE IS NO CHARGE FOR CHILD SUPPORT AGENCY SERVICES

- *Establish legal fatherhood (paternity)*
- *Locate an absent parent*
- *Establish a child support order*
- *Establish and enforce a medical support order*
- *Review and adjust a support order (modification)*
- *Collect and send out child support payments*

EITHER CUSTODIAN OR NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT CAN APPLY FOR CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

COLLABORATION PROJECT

**CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT DIVISION,
HEAD START, CHILD CARE PROVIDERS, AND
OTHER FAMILY SERVICE AGENCIES
ARE WORKING TOGETHER ON
A FEDERAL GRANT TO HELP FAMILIES
WITH THEIR CHILD SUPPORT NEEDS**

*The Alaska Child Support Enforcement Division's Southeast
Regional Office in Juneau is coordinating the project.
Melinda Cormany is the Project Coordinator.*

*You are encouraged to call Melinda at 465-5197 with any questions.
Shirley Dean is Project Director and can also answer questions
or provide information.*

*The office location is:
410 Willoughby Avenue, Suite 107
Juneau, AK 99801*

*465-5887
Toll free for Southeast Alaska Calls outside of Juneau
1-877-465-5887*

PATERNITY MEANS FATHERHOOD
WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO ESTABLISH PATERNITY?

- **MONEY** – Both parents are required by law to support their child - - it makes no difference if it was an unplanned pregnancy or if the couple is not married. Children who are supported by only one parent often don't have enough money for their needs.
- **BENEFITS** - Children have the right to benefits from both parents. These may include Social Security, health and life insurance, inheritance rights, veteran programs and other benefits. A child may lose out on the benefits unless paternity is established.
- **IDENTITY** – It's important to all of us to know who we are. Children have the right to the sense of belonging that comes from knowing both their parents.
- **MEDICAL** – Children need to know if they have inherited any special health problems.

HOW IS PATERNITY ESTABLISHED ?

- **IF THE MOTHER WAS MARRIED**
If the baby was conceived or born during the marriage, or if the mother was pregnant while married, state law says the husband is the father. If the legal father disputes paternity, he can take action to revoke paternity. This can be done through the courts or the child support agency.
- **THE PARENTS MAY ESTABLISH PATERNITY BY SIGNING AN AFFIDAVIT**
The man can sign an affidavit stating he is the father if the mother was unmarried during her pregnancy.
- **THE COURT OR CHILD SUPPORT AGENCY MUST DECIDE PATERNITY**
If either the father or the mother refuse to sign the affidavit acknowledging paternity, the child support agency can prepare the necessary paperwork, set up paternity testing and obtain an order establishing paternity.
- **NOW IS THE BEST TIME TO ESTABLISH PATERNITY**
Parents who help support their children early in life are more likely to continue supporting them. Children have the right to expect regular and continued support from both parents.

PATERNITY

HOW THE FATHER'S NAME IS ADDED TO BIRTH CERTIFICATES

- *It's automatic for married couples. If the couple is not married, the father's name will be added to the birth certificate if the mother and father sign a paternity affidavit at the hospital or birthing center.*
- *Paternity can be established at anytime until the child is age 18. If paternity is established after a birth certificate is issued, the Alaska Bureau of Vital Statistics charges a fee to process a paternity affidavit and issue a new birth certificate with the father's name. If you have questions, contact the Alaska Bureau of Vital Statistics at (907) 465-3392 or write PO Box 110675, Juneau, AK 99811-0675*

GENETIC TESTING

- *The mother, child and man who may be the father will be scheduled for a DNA test. A sample will be collected by gently rubbing the inside of each person's mouth with a swab similar to a Q-tip. The DNA tests conducted on swab specimens are the same DNA tests run on blood specimens. The tests are very accurate.*
- *The State of Alaska will pay for the tests if the child support agency is trying to establish paternity. Men who are not the father will not be billed for the costs, however, the actual father will be required to repay the state for the tests.*

WHAT IF THE FATHER IS STILL IN SCHOOL, HAS NO MONEY OR LIVES IN ANOTHER STATE?

- *Paternity can be established even if the father is under 18, attending school full time, or has no significant income. The minimum child support order is \$50 a month, and the amount can be reviewed and changed later when the father has a higher income. The same income and support order rules would apply to the mother if the father has custody of the child.*
- *Paternity also can be established if the father lives outside Alaska, but it may take more time. Every state has an agreement covering paternity establishment and collecting child support from a parent in another state.*

IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE SAFETY OF THE MOTHER OR BABY IF
PATERNITY IS ESTABLISHED, TALK WITH A CASEWORKER ABOUT CLAIMING
"GOOD CAUSE" FOR NOT NAMING THE FATHER

FINDING THE NONCUSTODIAL PARENT

To establish paternity, obtain a child support order or enforce an order, the child support agency must know where the other parent lives or works.

HOW LONG WILL ALL THIS TAKE?

The more information we receive from the custodial parent and the more accurate it is, the quicker we can get an order and start collecting support. Helpful information includes as many of the following items about the absent parent as possible:

- *Full name*
- *Full address*
- *Social Security number (this is very important)*
- *Date of birth*
- *Physical description and photograph*
- *Current or previous employer's name and address*
- *Other income and property information*
- *Telephone number*
- *Motor vehicle information – year, make, state and registration number*
- *Copies of any divorce decrees, separation papers, restraining orders, birth certificates, or other related documents*
- *Contact information of friends or relatives who may know where to locate the absent parent*

THE AGENCY WILL ATTEMPT TO FIND THE ABSENT PARENT

The child support agency will use the information provided by the custodial parent and will also search records of state agencies for additional information if necessary. If the absent parent has moved to another state, Alaska will ask that state's child support office for assistance.

DON'T IGNORE MAIL FROM THE CHILD SUPPORT AGENCY

*One of the most common mistakes people make is ignoring mail from the child support agency. **YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO IGNORE IT!***

LOCATING ABSENT PARENT

ESTABLISHING A SUPPORT ORDER

THE AGENCY USES COURT RULES TO ESTABLISH SUPPORT

- *Alaska Court Rule 90.3 requires the child support obligation to be set at a percentage of the adjusted annual income of the absent parent. If the absent parent does not provide income information, the child support agency will use the best information available to determine the parent's income from all sources.*

THE AGENCY WILL ISSUE A NOTICE OF CHILD SUPPORT AND MEDICAL INSURANCE:

- *Both parties will receive a copy of the notice and either party can appeal the findings.*
- *You can request an appeal if you believe there is a mistake or factual error in the support order.*
- *Timely responses are very important when a child support order is being established. Reply promptly and fully to ALL requests for information.*

ORDER MODIFICATION

EITHER PARTY CAN REQUEST A REVIEW IF CIRCUMSTANCES CHANGE

- *The order will be modified if the paying parent's income has gone up or down at least 15 percent from the last time the child support obligation was set.*
- *Private agreements between parties are not valid unless they are approved by a judge and entered in a court order.*
- *If either party requests a review, both parties will be required to provide the child support agency with financial information.*

SUPPORT ORDER/ MODIFICATION/COLLECTION

COLLECTING AND SENDING OUT PAYMENTS

MONEY COLLECTED BY THE CHILD SUPPORT AGENCY

- *Money collected by the agency will be paid directly to the custodial parent, unless they are receiving public assistance benefits.*
- *If the custodial parent is receiving public assistance they must assign the child support payment to the state in exchange for the benefits.*

ENFORCING A SUPPORT ORDER

AN ORDER TO WITHHOLD WAGES WILL BE SENT TO THE EMPLOYER

- *The agency will send a wage-withholding order to the parent's employer. A withholding order is not a punitive action but is required in all cases where the agency is enforcing a child support order – regardless if the account is current or past due.*
- *The employer is required to send the money directly to the child support agency, which will record it and send a check to the custodial parent.*

FAILURE TO MAKE PAYMENTS WILL PROMPT OTHER ACTIONS

- *These actions could include liens against a parent's assets, seeking court judgments, taking Permanent Fund dividends and/or IRS tax refunds, withholding from bank accounts and reporting to credit bureaus.*

MEDICAL SUPPORT IS REQUIRED BY FEDERAL AND ALASKA LAWS

- *Parents are required to provide medical support for their child if health insurance is available at a reasonable cost through their employer.*
- *Credit for medical coverage may raise or lower the amount of a parent's ongoing child support - - depending on which parent provides the coverage.*
- *Health insurance benefits available through the Indian Health Service may be accepted as fulfilling the legal requirement to provide medical insurance.*